

# *Flying Worms*



*by Harry Rimmer*

ScD., LL.D.

Mrs. Gerald Fischer

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## FLYING WORMS

by HARRY RIMMER

Spurgeon was once asked why he preached so often on the subject. "Ye must be born again." In reply he simply stated, "Because ye *must* be born again."

With this idea in mind Dr. Rimmer presents an appealing account of his answer to a young biology professor who approached him with a question concerning the meaning of being "born again." The need of the new birth is convincingly presented using several colorful illustrations to carry home the thoughts presented by logical reasoning and careful presentation of facts.

Then the case of the "Flying Worms" —specifically, the change of the lowly "worm" into a gorgeous, free-flying butterfly — is brought in to show that the new birth not only is needed, but is also an intensely practical thing within the range of experience for everyone. At this point the professor makes his own decision for Christ thereby being born again himself.

This true story is filled with many of the characteristic "Rimmerisms" and good humor so well known to the readers of this gifted scientist and Bible expositor.

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*Flying Worms*

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THE COMING LEAGUE AND THE ROMAN DREAM  
THE COMING KING  
FLYING WORMS  
STRAIGHT AHEAD LIES YESTERDAY**

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by

Harry Rimmer, Sc.D., LL.D.



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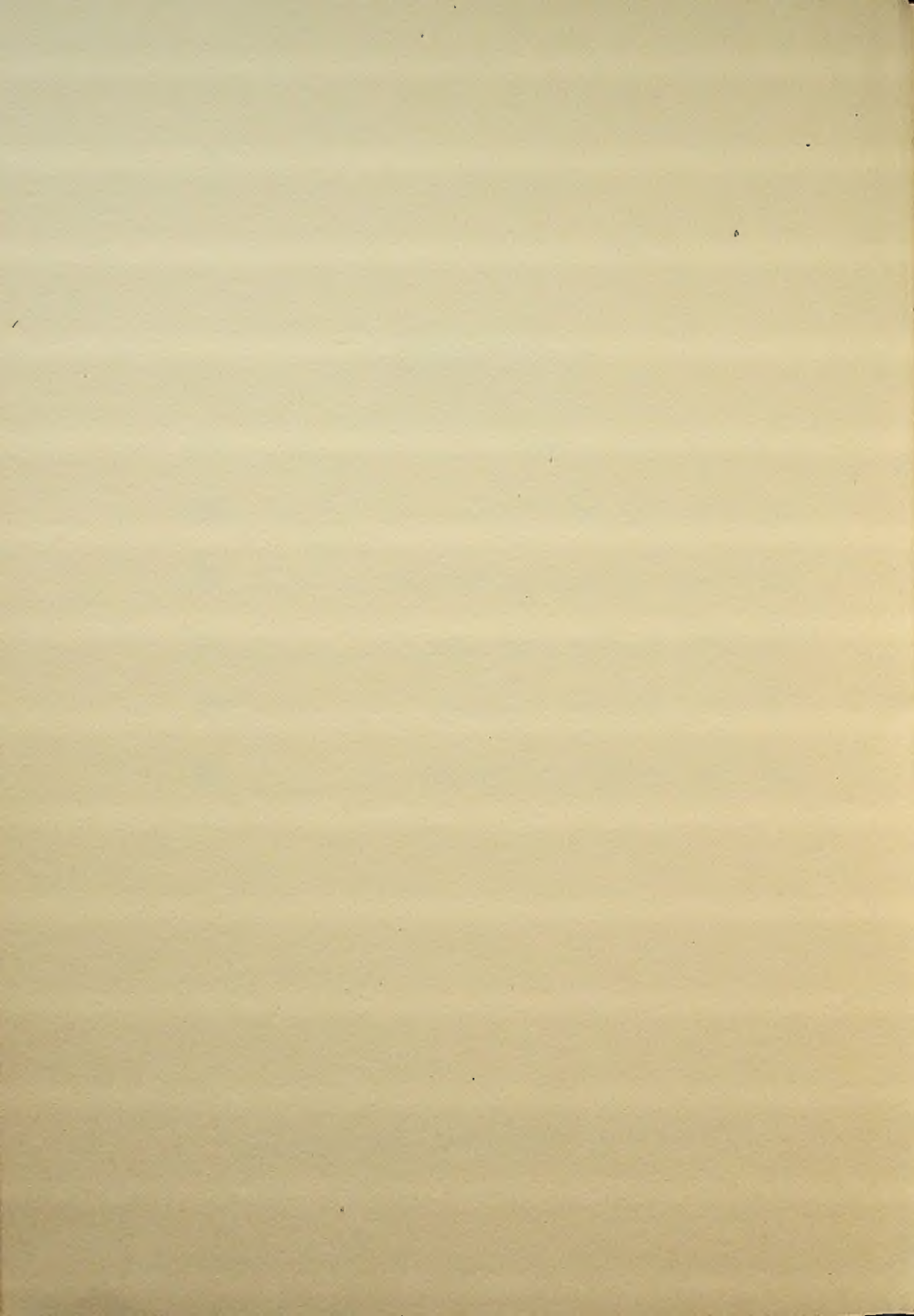
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*Flying Worms*



*The Occasion*



# I

## THE OCCASION

I KNOW that it is most unusual for a Doctor of Science to speak or write upon the subject of regeneration, although I do not know why this should be. If it is natural for a scientist to be interested in the phenomenon of birth, why should he not be equally interested in the mystery of the "New Birth"? By an amazing sequence of natural laws, all beyond the power of the human mind to comprehend, explain, or control, a human being is born into this world. In this process of conception and birth, mystery is piled upon mystery, and wonder is heaped upon wonder. The questions that are asked about a so-called "natural" birth are almost without number, and to most of them we can only reply "I do not know!"

For instance, no scientist knows where or how the fertilized ovum gets the mysterious power to divide and produce cells by the many billions, building these new cells into a fetus that shall be born an identical replica of the parent species. We only know that the old and abandoned chemico-mechanistic theory is utterly disproved, and we have no other to take its place. Again, it is useless to ask science from whence the quickened fetus received its life, or how that life was imparted. Does the soul of each individual **originate** when the embryo is "quickened"—or does it originate at physical birth? Or does it exist from past ages, in some heavenly store-house of souls, waiting its turn to be born? What is this "soul" anyhow; and does it derive from the "soul" of the mother, or is it an impartation from an outside and unknown source? No human being possesses the wisdom to answer these queries, but we believe in **birth** because we have countless case-histories of the phenomenon, and can prove it occurs. Then we also see

the operation of a living person after birth has transpired, hence we accept the fact and study the life that results.

How blind is the reason of the natural man, accepting all of the mysteries of natural birth, yet professing to reject the Christian doctrine of a "new" birth, on the grounds that he cannot understand its mysteries or explain how it occurs! We have the same objective proofs and the same sort of experimental evidence to sustain regeneration that upholds the fact of generation!

We have millions of "case histories" of men and women who have experienced a new birth and whose lives can be studied from that point on. There is a definite moment of time when the change occurs and a new life principle is imparted. As a result of this men of violence and sin become decent citizens and assets to their communities. Women whose lives were lived in evil and shame are transformed into the worthiest of persons, and give a daily demonstration of the fact of conversion. Yet the skept-

tic sees all of this evidence, and still claims to reject the fact on the basis of his own inability to understand the mystery. On that basis of reasoning, it would be equally intelligent and scientific to deny the fact of physical birth.

Have you ever noticed how often spiritual facts are illustrated in the physical world by what we might call the parables of nature? It almost seems as though God had illustrated the plan of salvation in many of the spheres of the natural order, thus making the physical creation a preface to the greater realm of the spiritual purposes of re-creation. It is from this source that we draw our parable of the "Flying Worms." It all came about in this manner:

Frequently I have the delightful experience of spending a week on the campus of some college or university, in what is commonly called a "Religious Emphasis Week." In such a campaign it is customary to speak three or four times a day to assemblies, and spend the rest of the time in interviews with

students and faculty members. Recently I had such a week at a certain university and at the end of the week a professor asked for a personal interview. When we sat down to talk I saw that he was a brilliant young man, and learned that he was head of the department of biology. I had seen him frequently in the student meetings, and mentioned the fact as I opened the conversation.

He replied, "Yes, doctor, I came to your first address largely impelled by curiosity. I wondered how the Committee had procured a man of **science** for 'religious emphasis week,' and was puzzled to know what a scientist would say in a preacher's sphere. Frankly, I was attracted by your approach and intrigued by your evidences, and I came to every meeting in the series. I find myself in agreement with practically everything you have said, and that surprises me, as I never thought of myself as a religious man. But there is **one** thing you said and repeated that I cannot grasp."

I asked, "What is the statement that bothers you?"

"You said," replied the professor, "that every human being has to be born again before he can fulfil the purpose of living and achieve his ultimate destiny. I can not grasp or understand that. Why do you say we all have to be 'born again'? Does that include me?"

"Yes," I answered, "that includes you. There is no exception. But you are mistaken in one point. I did not say that you had to be born again!"

"But you did!" the professor said most emphatically. "I heard you myself! Why, you said it again and again!"

"No," I insisted. "I didn't say that. I was just quoting the Lord Jesus Christ. He said you have to be born again, and if you want to argue the point dispute it with Him, and I'll sit by and see how you come out. Let me show you what Jesus said." I took out my pocket testament and read these words:

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. — (John 3:1-7).

The professor chuckled when I finished reading, and said, "All right, we'll accept the fact that Jesus originated the thesis 'you must be born again,' but you represent Him on this campus. I can't debate it with the Savior, but I have you here and can argue with you. Now, plainly, man to man, do I have to be 'born again'?"

"You do, doctor. You are no exception."

"Why? Am I not alive? And if I am alive, why must I be born again?"

"Yes, you are alive. You would be no candidate for the new birth if you weren't alive. But you are alive with the wrong sort or kind of life! Therefore you must be born again to get the right kind of life and live forever!"

"I don't get it! Can't you make it a bit clearer than that?"

"Why certainly, doctor. I believe that you, a biologist, could see the entire picture if you would think of the case of the Flying Worms!"

"Flying Worms?" The biologist scowled in concentration, and said, "I never saw any!"

"Oh, yes you did," I declared. "You just never thought of them that way!"

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*The Eternal "Why"*



## II

### THE ETERNAL 'WHY'

LET me digress for just a moment. We will come back to the professor, his problem, and its solution, but I want to emphasize the fact that there is an answer to every question that reason can raise, if we have sufficient wisdom or learning to know where to find the answer. The professor is not unique in his demand for a reasonable explanation of the need of the New Birth. Many others ask the same question. We are frequently greeted with the puzzled query, "Am I not alive? Why, then, do I need to be born again?"

It ought to be reason enough that Jesus said so! He came to open the gates of everlasting life to all who would enter in and be saved by His grace, yet lost men are not will-

ing to be guided by His counsel and wisdom.

In the citation from John's Gospel which you have just read there is the answer to more than one problem. Many scores of young people have professed bewilderment over the fact that their teachers are frequently unbelievers, and are often antagonistic to the Christian faith. They say to me, "My professor of some certain subject is a smart and learned man, but he doesn't believe the Bible or accept Christ. If the Bible is true, why isn't he a Christian?"

There are, of course, two answers to this query. The answer of Reason is that a person is not an authority on a subject that he has never studied! A doctor of medicine may be an expert at healing the sick, but be utterly ignorant about adjusting a carburetor or grinding the valves of an automobile! A garage mechanic may be a veritable wizard with a gas engine, but his opinion about dentistry would not carry much weight. In exactly the same manner, a professor of sociology, or botany, or chemistry, or any other

science, might be an authority in his field, but that does not make him capable of settling a question of theology! I constantly marvel at the crass assumption of infallibility seen in many teachers when they deal with Christian evidences, of which they know less than a cow knows about a typewriter! These same gentry would be the first to cry out against a preacher invading **their** fields and opposing them, and would immediately demand his credentials in that particular subject under debate. But they calmly presume to contradict the theologian in **his** field, when they haven't the remotest idea of the sources and evidences that support and sustain Christianity!

When **your** teachers deny the facts of Christianity or question the validity of the Bible in your presence, demand their authority before you are swayed by their opinions, which are generally baseless and prejudiced!

But the answer from Revelation is more important and conclusive than the answer from reason. Remember that Jesus said,

"Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the Kingdom of God." At first He said "see," not "enter." That came later. To see, in this manner, is to comprehend. So His statement is that any person outside of the Kingdom of God cannot understand it. He has to be "born again" into that kingdom before he can have any knowledge of it.

Some short time ago I was working in my hotel room in New York City, when my phone rang and a caller was announced from the desk in the lobby. I spoke to the visitor by phone, and he said he had a personal problem that he needed help with, so I invited him up for an interview.

A fine looking young man came in response to the invitation, dark of eyes and hair and swarthy of skin. I made a mental bet that I knew where he came from, while I took his hat and made him comfortable. I opened the conversation by asking bluntly, "What is your problem and how can I help?"

"Doctor," he answered, "I am deeply troubled because I can't understand Christianity!"

"What **right** have you to understand it?" I asked. "Are you a Christian?"

"No," he confessed, "I'm not a Christian, but I have every right in the world to understand it. I studied it at Columbia University." I could have told him that this great learning does not come by study, but by experience, but instead I asked him, "Where do you come from originally? You were not born in America, were you?"

"No," he replied, "I was born in Armenia. But I am a citizen now. I was naturalized as soon as I could be."

(I took a quarter out of my left hand pocket and put it in my right hand pocket, to pay me for winning the bet from myself. I was sure he was an Armenian by birth as soon as I saw him!) Then I asked, "What did you do when you lived in the very lovely land of Armenia?"

"Oh," he answered, "part of the time I tended sheep, some of the time I worked in the vineyards, and the rest of the time I went to school."

"Now," I asked, "when you were a lad, living a life that was normal to most Armenian lads, and while you dwelt in the hills of Armenia, **did you know all about New York City?** Could you find your way around? Did you know what subway to take to the Bronx and which would take you to Brooklyn? Did you know how to find the Chrysler Building and the Irving Trust Building? Did you know where each elevated line went, and did you—"

He interrupted me rather impatiently and said, "Of course not! How could I know anything about this wonderful city of New York when I had never been here?"

I opened my Bible and read him these same words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" I made

him grasp the important fact that a man can no more comprehend Christianity from the outside than an Armenian can comprehend America without ever coming here and experiencing our way of life! A Chinese, born in the heart of China and dying right there, never having left his native village, would be as good an authority on America as an unbeliever on the question of Christianity! To know America a foreigner has to emigrate from one country and immigrate into this, another one. In like manner, the Kingdom of Heaven is comprehended only by those who are citizens of that Kingdom. And this citizenship is achieved only by the new birth. Thus declared Jesus Christ and as He is the Sovereign of that Kingdom, He should know the conditions of entrance and citizenship in His own domain!

But the word of Jesus is not enough for the natural man and the carnal mind, so we have to answer the demands of human reason with statements and facts that such reason

can accept. So we now set forth in simple fashion the "why" of the matter, and show the answers which God gives to the man who says, "Why must I be born again?"

*God's Appeal to Reason*



### III

#### GOD'S APPEAL TO REASON

**I**F an inquirer were intelligent enough, we could answer his query in one sentence by saying, "You **must** be born again, because you can't get to Heaven unless you **are** regenerated!" That **ought** to be enough, as every intelligent person who thinks upon the mystery of life and the certainty of death, at least **desires** to go to Heaven! I never met but one man in all of my experience who said he **didn't** want to go to Heaven when he died, and he got mad when I then told him **where he could go!**

I don't see why a man should blaze up in anger over so simple a proposition as this. There are but two places to go, and we know that the soul can't hang around forever, half way between these two places. So if a man

really doesn't want to go to Heaven, the only alternative is quite clear, and he shouldn't fly into a rage when we point it out to him!

I confess that we Christians are a strange group, and our conduct is sometimes hard to reconcile with consistency. We sing about Heaven, we tell of its wonders and delights, and pay our doctor to keep us out of this happy land of the spirit as long as he can do so! We claim to desire Heaven, but when one of our loved ones achieves this goal, we drape ourselves in black and mourn and weep over his good fortune!

I suspect the fact is we want to go to Heaven — ultimately — but we are in no hurry about it. We would like to postpone it for some hundred years or so!

When I was just a young lad, I heard a story that perfectly illustrates the attitude of the Christian on this point, and perhaps gives us a chance at some justification. In the days when the West was much wilder and far woollier than it is now, an evangelist,

supported by the Sunday School Union, was holding services in a little school house on the range. One night a cowboy, coming back from a line-camp, rode past the school, and seeing the lights shining out of the windows, he stopped to see what was going on. He sat on the top step and leaned back against the door post, listening with great interest while the evangelist closed his sermon by saying, "Everyone here who wants to go to Heaven, raise your hand." Every hand came up except that of the cowboy, who sat there with a wise grin on his lips. The Evangelist challenged him, "My friend, don't *you* want to go to Heaven?"

"Nope," the cow-puncher replied, "I'm quite satisfied where I am, and I don't hanker to move, not even to Heaven."

"That's strange," the preacher retorted. "Every one else here wants to go to Heaven, and you look like a sensible young man!"

The cowboy laughingly argued, "Preacher, you're wrong. There ain't none of these folks who want to go to Heaven! They just

did a little polite lying to make you feel good, but they don't really want to go to Heaven any more than I do!"

It was the preacher's turn to grin, as he said, "Son, you'd have a hard time proving that!"

"Not at all," the cow-hand answered. "I could prove that in less than a minute!"

"Come ahead and do it," the preacher invited, and sat back to see what would occur.

The cowboy settled his hat on the back of his head, rose to his feet and slouched down the aisle. He stood there facing the crowd, and they sized him up for a tough, carefree, hardbitten specimen of his kind. Then, in a thick silence, the dissenter drew a Colt .45 pistol in each hand and quietly said—

"Anybody really wanting to go to Heaven — just stand up! One at a time, please!"

I suppose the lad thought he had proved his point, but he hadn't. He didn't prove that those folks had no desire for Heaven,

he only showed that they didn't want to go **right then!** Of course Christians love life: they have more to live for than any other group or class of humans in all this world. They have a knowledge of God and a source of power in His Spirit which makes their days wonderful and their nights glad, and no person really knows the full sweetness of life unless it is lived with Christ. But when our natural span is finished and the sands of our years are fully run out, we desire, hope, and expect to get to Heaven. And since Hell is the only alternative, any sensible person agrees with us.

So it ought to be enough to say, in answer to the question, "Why must I be born again?" "Because you can't go to Heaven unless you are!"

The professor listened with courteous interest up to this point, then he interrupted to say, "I suppose we will soon come to these 'Flying Worms?'"

I said, "Yes, we are closing in on them. As soon as we get this premise established we

can then apply our parable. This is the main reason Jesus said, 'Ye must be born again.' He didn't say, 'I recommend it' or 'It's a good idea, you ought to try it.' To put his words in modern 'slanguage,' He said, 'You've gotta be born again!' You can't get to Heaven unless you are."

The professor laughed outright, and with twinkling eyes said, "At the risk of getting shot, I am going to ask 'Why?' Why can't I get to Heaven without this new birth?"

I assured him that this was no new question, and that his reaction was normal and commonplace. A thousand and more students have asked the same thing, and perhaps you also have wondered over this. The answer constitutes God's appeal to human reason!

In the first place, you can't get to Heaven the way you are, because **your body is wrong!** Supreme Intelligence designed the human body for the physical conditions of the planet Earth, and it is perfect for that environment. Just as God created fish to live

in water, and worms to live in the soil, He created man to live on this globe. Our bodies would be utterly useless on any other planet.

Suppose you should desire to go to the neighboring planet Mercury. You could not take your present body there, as it is composed largely of fluids. Your body is 65 per cent water, and most fluids boil around the temperature of 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Since the planet Mercury has a temperature of 750 degrees Fahrenheit, you could see what would happen to a body made up largely of fluids, if it were suddenly transported to that planet! By nine o'clock in the morning your blood would come out of your nose and ears as a pink stream! By noon they would bury you under a stone on which they had engraved the appropriate text:

"Well Done! Thou Good and  
Faithful Servant."

And you *would* be "well done"! In fact, you would have been burned to a crisp. Try living for a few hours in a temperature of

750 degrees and see what I mean! Your earthly body would be no good on Mercury.

To carry the illustration to the other extreme, suppose you tried to take your body to the planet Neptune, where the temperature is estimated to be around 400 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit! In twenty minutes you would be a solid block of ice, and not even the heat of Mercury could thaw you back to life again.

There is no other planet in our solar system where your present body could remain alive. The lack of atmosphere, the absence of water or food, and the difference in temperature and gravity makes it absolutely impossible for a human body to survive off the planet Earth.

So then, if your body will not do for another planet, how could it survive and function in Heaven, which lies beyond the uttermost planet and star? To occupy Heaven, you need a new body; one that is designed and planned for Heaven as your present body is made for the Earth. The only known

way to get such a new body is to be "born again," thus securing a part in the resurrection of the blessed dead, and through this final experience obtaining a body that is like the body of Jesus after His resurrection from the dead. Indeed, the entire fifteenth chapter of the First Corinthian Epistle, one of the high points of the New Testament, is written to show that we who now bear a body that is **earthly** shall some day possess a body that is **heavenly**, if we receive Christ and are "born again."

The second reason we cannot go to Heaven the way we are, is because our **natures** are wrong. God, who created a body for each creature, according to the environment for which He planned it, also gave to each creature a nature fitted to that body and that sphere of living. That nature limits the extent of the possessor's individual life.

By way of illustration, let us consider an Airedale dog. This particular variety of canine was bred to hunt. He is a natural enemy of the cat family, and is superb as a

leader of a pack of lion hounds. The smaller hounds, like the blood-hound, red-bone and fox-hound, are vastly superior to the Airedale at trailing and finding a scent. So when the pack starts out the Airedale, knowing his limitations, will trail along at the rear of the pack, while the hounds pick up a trail. But when the scent gets hot and the lion is close, the arrangement changes! With a bel-lowed "Wahoo!" the Airedale will come ploughing through the lighter and smaller hounds, and like all of the terrier breed, will surge ahead lusting for battle! In a matter of minutes he will have the lion "treed" — and when the hunter catches up to the pack he will congratulate the fighting Airedale first!

One of the greatest dogs I have ever known or owned was an Airedale we named "Chum." We raised him from a puppy, and I taught him the proper field conduct. I never had to teach him to hunt, he was born knowing all about that! I only trained him in restraint and obedience on the trail.

Supposing my great hunting dog had come to me and had said, "Boss, I'm tired of hunting, there seems to be no future in the business. I am smitten with a desire for a Higher Life, and I want you to help me rise to attain a nobler way of living."

Of course I would say, "Chum, I will be glad to help if I can, but what do you want to do, or be?"

Now imagine that the dog should reply, "Well, I've been watching our canary bird. Now **there** is the Higher Life, indeed. I believe I'd like to sit on a perch and sing songs, or maybe build a nest and lay some eggs. Will you help me?"

How utterly ludicrous! How could I, or any other person, help an Airedale dog to live the life of a bird? His **nature** is wrong. To live a bird life you must have a bird nature! I couldn't even **explain** this to a dog, his very nature makes it impossible.

To continue the figure, it would be equally preposterous for my canary bird to say: "I am tired of this life of swinging and twit-

tering, and I want to accomplish something real. Will you help me?"

I would if I could, of course, so I would reply, "Well, Dickie, let's talk it over. What do you want to do or be?"

I would be utterly nonplussed if the canary replied, "I want to hunt! The next time you go out after mountain lions, take me along. I'll chase those lions up a tree for you, and do it in short order!"

A canary bird on a lion hunt would be of no more use than a dog would be in a bird cage. Its nature is wrong for hunting, and the nature of each creature limits its activities, its accomplishments, its desires and its environment.

**You were born with a human nature.** This might have been all right once, and it probably was, since God imparted that nature to Adam when He created him and gave him the lordship over the planet Earth. But after that, this "human nature" became ruined by sin, and you inherited a fallen hu-

man nature. The effect of that nature is written in fire, in bombs, in blood and in tears all over the face of the modern world! Human nature has turned the earth in our day into a counterpart of Hell, with mass murder and armed force the only refuge of the race.

How then could you take such a nature into Heaven? Heaven is a place of peace and love, where God and the angels dwell, together with all saints who have received a "new nature." The only known way to secure this new nature is to become **born again**, and thus receive the nature of God. You see, by birth we are **all the children of Adam**, and we are born with Adam's nature. But when we are "born again" we **become the children of God**, and He imparts to us His nature, thus fitting us for Heaven. You can't get to Heaven the way you are, your nature is wrong!

And finally, you cannot enter Heaven 'as you are, because your **thoughts** are all wrong. This is probably the most important

point of all, as it is the basis of God's judgment of men. Do you remember why the flood came upon the earth in the days of Noah? The record states, "And God saw that every imagination of the heart of man, and every thought was continually evil in His sight without exception"! (Marlowe's Translation). For this reason God destroyed the ante-deluvian race, and such a judgment was inevitable. Out of the mind come the seeds of conduct, the imagination is the fountain from which spring the deeds of our daily living. When the **mind** of a man is prostituted to evil, his entire manner of life becomes an offense to all that is decent and clean.

The imagination is probably the greatest of all man's natural endowments. By its strange power he has been able to bridge chasms and span the seven seas. By the proper use of human imagination man has plumbed the deeps in iron fish of his own devising, and has conquered the skies with metal birds of his own fabrication. But when

that imagination turns to evil devices, man is degraded. He then uses his sciences to destroy and his machines to maim and slay; and the sole reason the earth is swept by the flames of war today is the fact that man's moral development has not kept pace with his mental and scientific achievements.

Man uses his God-given imagination to devise strange sins and concoct horrible practices that no decent animal would be guilty of following, and the first chapter of the Roman Epistle is the result. No wonder God said, "Your thoughts are not my thoughts, and your ways are not my ways"! Truly the ways and thoughts of God are as high above those of men as the heavens are above the earth!

It was said of Jesus that He needed not that any should tell Him of man, as He knew what was in man. Can you conceive of an unsaved sinner, with an unregenerated mind, received into Heaven, there to dwell in the presence of a God who knew his every thought? Indeed not: to be fitted for Heav-

en we **must** have a "new mind," and the only way to get such is to be born again! When that new birth has been accomplished, we can then say with Paul, "We have the mind of Christ!" Thus we are truly made fit for the presence of God, and without that preparation there is no hope of attaining to the blessed estate.

*The Parable Presented*



## IV

### THE PARABLE PRESENTED

AT this point in our interview the professor said, "That is clear and explicit, and even though I am on strange ground and have never thought along this line before, I'm inclined to agree with all of this. I am a biologist, not a theologian, so I'm out of my realm here. But this seems to be reasonable and sound philosophy. Come over into my field now, and tell me about those 'Flying Worms.' What are they and how do they clarify the need of the New Birth?"

"All right," I assented, "and you will see the perfection of the illustration as soon as I start. But don't interrupt me, just let me go on through. Suppose a caterpillar came to me and said, 'I feel that I am living a most useless life, wasting all my time tied to a bush

and chewing leaves! I want to change my way of life. Will you help me?"

"Of course I'd like to help an ambitious worm to live a higher and better existence, so I would reply, 'If I can. What do you want to do?' Whereupon the caterpillar would say, 'I want to fly! I've been watching the birds, and I believe they live an ideal life. Can you help me attain my ambition, and assist me to fly?'"

"What shall I do? Shall I give the caterpillar a course of instruction in aero-dynamics and the theory of flight? No, that won't help; there are some things that are not achieved by education! Shall I tell the caterpillar how to become a better caterpillar? No, that will not work either. He can be the best caterpillar that ever catted a pillar; but he still can't fly! That's his trouble, he's a worm and worms don't fly!"

"(We meet the same problem in our human relations. It is not Christian Education that is needed, education does not change the nature of man! It is not social service

that is required — a man can be as nearly perfect a man as human nature will permit, but he is still not a child of God!)

“So I say to the caterpillar, ‘Strangely enough, I can help you. There are certain natural laws, which, if you will obey, will enable you to fly!’ In great delight the worm says, ‘Now we are arriving somewhere. Will you teach me those laws?’

“With regret I reply, ‘I’m sorry, worm, but I can’t do that. I do not know those laws myself!’

“(Nor do I, even though I have studied them for over 30 years. When I first began my research in science, I started to find out what happens when a worm goes to bed and a butterfly wakes up where the caterpillar went to sleep! I still don’t know. It’s not my fault, but when that worm retires into his home-made bedroom and pulls down the blinds, he pulls them down so tightly I can’t peek! And I have tried to peek, using every scientific device from a microscope to a spectroscope. I do not know of a single scientist

who does know what happens in that darkened bedroom where the metamorphosis occurs.)

"The disappointed caterpillar says, 'You're a hot scientist! You've seen this thousands of times and you can't explain it? What am I going to do, if you can't teach me those laws?'

"I smile and say, 'Just obey them whether you comprehend them or not.'

"After some thought the ambitious worm says, 'All right, doctor, I'll take your advice. What do I do now?' I tell him, 'Just go right on chewing leaves!'

"So my caterpillar goes back to his bush and resumes his daily grind. Then one day a strange lassitude comes over him, and he loses his appetite for leaves. He has never had a nap in his life, but suddenly he feels sleepy. He crawls away to a secluded corner, and suddenly discovers that he possesses equipment and knowledge that he never knew he had. He becomes an architect and designs a house. He has never thought of a

dwelling before and has never seen one, but his first attempt follows a pattern that is standard dwelling for all caterpillars of his variety, and is perfect for its purpose. He finds that he has a spinning machine in his mouth, and an unlimited supply of fabric somewhere down in his goozlum! He is an interior decorator and a water-proofer as well, and he builds a habitation for himself that the genius of man cannot duplicate.

"Lazy days pass by in dreamless slumber (we suppose he doesn't dream!) and then suddenly our worm wakes up. He feels crowded, and his shoulders feel like he is a hunch-back. He finds that he has a tooth on the top of his head, where he never had one before. He starts nodding his head up and down, and he saws his house open and steps out. He shrugs his shoulders and a gorgeous pair of wings opens in the warm sunshine and starts to dry. A few minutes later, without asking me or anyone else how to do it, he spreads his wings and takes to the air, to fly the rest of his life. My worm flies because he

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obeys a set of natural laws, which he never comprehends, and which are equally mysterious to us. But we and he both know they work, because we have the observed result of many cases!"

When I concluded the parable the doctor said very thoughtfully, "The illustration is apt indeed. Do you mean that there are certain natural laws, which, if I will obey, will result in my New Birth?"

"No," I said. "There are certain supernatural laws which you must observe to be born again!"

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*The Parable Applied*



## V

### THE PARABLE APPLIED

“**Y**OU see,” I continued, “there is a sphere called nature where physical miracles occur. That is, if you define a miracle as an orderly proceeding on the plane of a law which is higher than our present comprehension. We don’t know **how** caterpillars turn into butterflies, we just know they do. In that same sense we admit that we do not know how the lost sons of Adam’s race become the saved sons of God, we just know that obedience to certain clearly defined orders of procedure always result in the supernatural change. Let me read you a strange sequence from the New Testament, which is emphasized by the exact vocabulary of the Original Greek text.”

I reached for my pocket New Testament and showed him this strange but illuminating sequence. The whole Christian world knows by this time that the science of archeology has cast a veritable flood of light upon the odd and obscure words which we find in the Koine text, which is the ancient form of the Greek language in which the New Testament was originally written. Here is one of those odd words, found just three times in the entire New Testament. The word is "metamorphomai" and is found in the record of the Transfiguration of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew in these words:

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (Matt. 17: 1, 2.)

We are not sure just what happened when Jesus was transfigured, but it seems as though the Deity which is His by nature shone through the obscuring veil of His flesh, and men saw Him as He will be in the coming Kingdom, when His Godhood will be apparent to all. The text says "transfigured" and this is our quaint Greek word "metamorphomai."

The second occurrence is in the Roman Epistle, where we read:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1, 2.)

Here we find the word "metamorphomai" again, this time translated by the English word "transformed." But it implies the same in both instances, whether in the transfiguration of Jesus or the transfiguration of the believer. The literal statement is that God can and will give to us a "new mind" by which we partake of the nature of Jesus.

Once again, and for the last time, we meet the word in the Second Corinthian Epistle, where Paul writes:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.  
(II Cor. 3:18.)

This promise is startling indeed. The word "metamorphomai" is here translated "changed", and the text states that when we gaze long enough upon the glory of Jesus, we see, as in a mirror, our own reflected

image, now "changed" to the exact similitude of Him! This is the end of the Christian process of regeneration.

When the early biologists found out that caterpillars changed into butterflies and could not discover how, they wanted to describe the process. So they took the old Greek word "metamorphomai" and made it into the modern form of "metamorphosis" which we still use to describe the birth of a butterfly!

So you see our parable is very exact — we do become "changed" by the inexplicable mystery and wonder of the New Birth, just as worms get wings by a process of metamorphosis. But whereas the caterpillar does it by obedience to **natural** law, we gain the new life by obeying **super-natural** laws!



*An Intelligent Decision*



## VI

### AN INTELLIGENT DECISION

HAVING thus concluded my illustration, I sat back and waited for the professor of biology to comment. I didn't wait long; he was right on the beam! Very thoughtfully he said, "This new birth always comes in obedience to some certain supernatural laws."

I answered, "Always!"

He said with grave and earnest emphasis, "Can you teach me those laws?"

"Unfortunately," I replied, "I do not know them myself. I just know that they work."

"Then," said the professor, "what must I do to be saved?"

There is only one answer to that, and it was written many centuries ago. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **thou shalt be saved!**"

"Just how do you do that?" he asked, and by way of answer I turned him to the Roman Epistle, where we read together:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Rom. 10: 9, 10.)

"You will observe," I said, "that according to this Scripture there are **two** things which a man must **believe** to be a Christian, and **one** thing which he must **do**. The first

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premise that you must accept is that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God. Do you believe that?"

The professor nodded, and said, "I do. I have never seen any proof against it, and certainly we cannot explain Him any other way. Yes, I can say that I do believe that Jesus was the Son of God."

"Good!" I answered. "Now the second thing you have to believe is that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scripture, and rose again from the dead to be our Savior. Do you believe that?"

"Certainly," he replied. "I am not completely ignorant of the historical facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus — any educated person ought to believe that!"

"All right," I continued. "You believe the two essentials, that Christ, the Son of God, died and rose to save sinners. That's all

you have to **believe** to be saved, now here is the one thing you have to **do**. Will you, here and now, accept Christ as your personal Savior and commit your life to Him?"

I held out my hand and the professor quickly grasped it. "I will," he said, "and I do." So, having thus confessed Christ, and after a few words of prayer together, I left this man whose intelligent decision had made of him a "Flying Worm" indeed!

I wonder if you who read these pages are capable of a like intelligent decision? God has done all that He can do for your salvation, He gave His Only Begotten Son to die for your sins.

Jesus has done all that He can do to save you from Hell and make Heaven certain for you — He shed His blood to expiate your sins.

The rest is decidedly up to you. Will **you**, here and now, receive Christ as **your** Savior from sin? Thus only can you be "born again," thus only can you find life eternal. The decision is yours, what shall it be?

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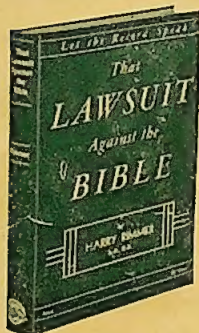
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